

What is claimed is:

1. A system for detecting a removal of a device from a connection thereof to a communications network, the system comprising:

5 an interface for receiving, from the device, signals through the communications network, the signals indicating continuity of the connection, each of the signals containing information identifying the device; and

 a server responsive to receipt of a first one of
10 the signals for determining whether a second one of the signals is received within a period from the receipt of the first signal, an alert being generated if it is determined that the second signal is not received within the period.

15 2. The system according to claim 1, wherein the communications network includes a two-way multichannel delivery network.

 3. The system according to claim 2, wherein the
20 delivery network includes a cable TV network.

 4. The system according to claim 3, wherein the cable TV network includes a hybrid fiber coaxial (HFC) cable network.

25 5. The system according to claim 3, wherein the device receives programming content from the communications network.

6. The system according to claim 5, wherein the device includes a host device having an interface for coupling with a point-of-deployment (POD) module for providing conditional access to selected programming
5 content.

7. The system according to claim 6, wherein the selected programming content is selected by the system.

10 8. The system according to claim 6, wherein the selected programming content includes video-on-demand (VOD) content.

9. The system according to claim 1, wherein the
15 information includes a serial number pre-assigned to the device.

10. A system for tracking a device connectable to a communications network through one of a plurality of nodes, the nodes being associated with respective ones of service
20 areas, the device being identifiable by identifying data, the system comprising:

an interface for receiving, through a first node, a request for connection of the device to the communications
25 network after the device has been connected to the communications network through a second node, the request including information concerning the device; and

a server for determining whether at least part of the information corresponds to the identifying data, the
30 first node being identified through which the request is

received if it is determined that at least part of the information corresponds to the identifying data,

whereby the device is presumed to be located in the service area associated with the first node.

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11. The system according to claim 10, further comprising a mechanism for causing the device to generate a detectable signal to facilitate locating the device within the service area associated with the first node.

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12. The system according to claim 10, wherein the detectable signal contains information for identifying the device.

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13. The system according to claim 10, wherein the communications network includes a two-way multichannel delivery network.

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14. The system according to claim 13, wherein the delivery network includes a cable TV network.

15. The system according to claim 14, wherein the cable TV network includes an HFC cable network.

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16. The system according to claim 14, wherein the device receives programming content from the communications network.

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17. The system according to claim 16, wherein the device includes a host device having an interface for

coupling with a POD module for providing conditional access to selected programming content.

18. The system according to claim 17, wherein the
5 selected programming content is selected by the system.

19. The system according to claim 17, wherein the selected programming content includes VOD content.

10 20. The system according to claim 10, wherein the identifying data includes a serial number pre-assigned to the device.

21. Apparatus for receiving programming content from a
15 communications network, the apparatus being identifiable by identifying data, the apparatus comprising:

an interface for coupling with a device for effecting a communication to a server through the communications network, the communication including the
20 identifying data, and an address of the device within the communications network; and

a transmission mechanism, a message being sent to the address if the apparatus has been removed from a connection to the communications network without
25 authorization, the message causing the transmission mechanism to generate a detectable signal for locating the apparatus.

22. The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the
30 address includes an Internet protocol (IP) address.

23. The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the address includes a media access control (MAC) address.

24. The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the
5 identifying data includes a serial number pre-assigned to the apparatus.

25. The apparatus according to claim 21, wherein the detectable signal contains information concerning a serial
10 number pre-assigned to the apparatus.

26. The apparatus according to claim 21, further comprising a modem for modulating signals representing the communication.

15 27. The apparatus according to claim 21 comprising an entertainment unit.

28. The apparatus according to claim 27, wherein the
20 entertainment unit includes a TV unit.

29. A method for use in a system for detecting a removal of a device from a connection thereof to a communications network, the method comprising:
25 receiving, from the device, signals through the communications network, the signals indicating continuity of the connection, each of the signals containing information identifying the device;
in response to receipt of a first one of the
30 signals, determining whether a second one of the signals is

received within a period from the receipt of the first signal; and

generating an alert if it is determined that the second signal is not received within the period.

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30. The method according to claim 29, wherein the communications network includes a two-way multichannel delivery network.

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31. The method according to claim 30, wherein the delivery network includes a cable TV network.

32. The method according to claim 31, wherein the cable TV network includes an HFC cable network.

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33. The method according to claim 31, wherein the device receives programming content from the communications network.

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34. The method according to claim 33, wherein the device includes a host device having an interface for coupling with a point-of-deployment (POD) module for providing conditional access to selected programming content.

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35. The method according to claim 34, wherein the selected programming content is selected by the system.

36. The method according to claim 34, wherein the selected programming content includes video-on-demand (VOD) content.

5 37. The method according to claim 29, wherein the information includes a serial number pre-assigned to the device.

38. A method for tracking a device connectable to a communications network through one of a plurality of nodes, the nodes being associated with respective ones of service areas, the device being identifiable by identifying data, the method comprising:

15 receiving, through a first node, a request for connection of the device to the communications network after the device has been connected to the communications network through a second node, the request including information concerning the device; and

20 determining whether at least part of the information corresponds to the identifying data, the first node being identified through which the request is received if it is determined that at least part of the information corresponds to the identifying data,

25 whereby the device is presumed to be located in the service area associated with the first node.

39. The method according to claim 38, further comprising causing the device to generate a detectable signal to facilitate locating the device within the service area associated with the first node.

40. The method according to claim 38, wherein the detectable signal contains information for identifying the device.

5 41. The method according to claim 38, wherein the communications network includes a two-way multichannel delivery network.

10 42. The method according to claim 41, wherein the delivery network includes a cable TV network.

43. The method according to claim 42, wherein the cable TV network includes an HFC cable network.

15 44. The method according to claim 42, wherein the device receives programming content from the communications network.

20 45. The method according to claim 44, wherein the device includes a host device having an interface for coupling with a POD module for providing conditional access to selected programming content.

25 46. The method according to claim 45, wherein the selected programming content is selected by the system.

47. The method according to claim 45, wherein the selected programming content includes VOD content.

48. The method according to claim 38, wherein the identifying data includes a serial number pre-assigned to the device.

5 49. A method for use in an apparatus for receiving programming content from a communications network, the apparatus including a transmission mechanism and being identifiable by identifying data, the method comprising:
 providing an interface for coupling with a device
10 for effecting a communication to a server through the communications network, the communication including the identifying data, and an address of the device within the communications network; and
 sending a message to the address if the apparatus
15 has been removed from a connection to the communications network without authorization, the message causing the transmission mechanism to generate a detectable signal for locating the apparatus.

20 50. The method according to claim 49, wherein the address includes an IP address.

 51. The method according to claim 49, wherein the address includes a MAC address.

25 52. The method according to claim 49, wherein the identifying data includes a serial number pre-assigned to the apparatus.

53. The method according to claim 49, wherein the detectable signal contains information concerning a serial number pre-assigned to the apparatus.

5 54. The method according to claim 49, further comprising modulating signals representing the communication.

10 55. The method according to claim 49, wherein the apparatus comprises an entertainment unit.

56. The method according to claim 55, wherein the entertainment unit includes a TV unit.